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Publication number: **0 490 797 B1**

12

## EUROPEAN PATENT SPECIFICATION

45 Date of publication of patent specification: **02.08.95** 51 Int. Cl.<sup>8</sup>: **A61M 15/00**

21 Application number: **91420448.2**

22 Date of filing: **12.12.91**

54 Inhalation actuated dispensing apparatus.

30 Priority: **13.12.90 US 626732**

43 Date of publication of application:  
**17.06.92 Bulletin 92/25**

45 Publication of the grant of the patent:  
**02.08.95 Bulletin 95/31**

84 Designated Contracting States:  
**AT BE CH DE DK ES FR GB GR IT LI LU MC  
NL SE**

56 References cited:  
**US-A- 3 605 738  
US-A- 4 955 371**

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## Description

The present invention relates to inhalation actuated devices for dispensing inhalants or the like from a pressured inhalant containing canister, and more particularly to an inhalation actuated dispensing apparatus wherein valve stem leakage and damage is substantially reduced because no force is applied to the valve stem of the canister or any time other than during the brief period when the dispensing of the inhalant is occurring.

Many pharmaceuticals intended to be administered by inhalation are supplied in pressurized aerosol canisters which dispense a metered amount of inhalant when triggered by the actuation of a valve. The valve has an outwardly extending spring loaded valve stem upon which a manually depressible plastic nozzle is mounted. The nozzle serves as a force transfer member for the finger and to direct and shape the inhalant spray. It has an internal passageway with an axially extending section adapted to receive the valve stem and a section extending towards the side surface of the nozzle, usually having a conical configuration, so as to form a conical-shaped spray pattern. The nozzle is depressed by the finger to apply sufficient force on the valve stem, in a direction toward the canister, to actuate the valve.

Such manually operated spray devices may be difficult for certain individuals to use effectively because they require coordination of the breathing of the user with valve manipulation. Children, the elderly and individuals with other types of muscular coordination impairment may find it hard to actuate the device at the correct time. There is a tendency to overdose or underdose, both of which are disadvantageous and are results to be avoided when medicines are involved.

In order to overcome this problem, inhalation actuated dispensing devices have been developed. An example of such device is described in US patent 3,605,738. In general, such devices include a housing within which a moveable element is moved to a latched position against a compression spring. An air passageway in the housing is at least partially blocked by a vane or door. Upon inhalation on a mouthpiece, the door opens, unlatching the element. The spring urges the element to apply sufficient force to depress the valve stem to dispense the inhalant into a mouthpiece. Thus, a dose of inhalant is released in coordination with the inhalation of the patient.

However, pressured canisters require a relatively large force, in the order of from four to either pounds to depress the valve stem completely against the internal spring to release the inhalant. Any automatic actuation device designed for use with such a canister must be capable of applying a

force on the valve stem large enough to cause the required depression of the stem. This requires a relatively powerful spring.

In conventional automatic actuation devices, once the inhalant has been dispensed, the relatively powerful spring continues to urge the force applying element to apply the relatively large force on the valve stem. It is only after the device is rearmed, by latching the force applying element in the armed position that the force is released. The continuous application of such a large amount of force on the valve stem tends to cause unwanted discharge or leakage of the inhalant and may eventually result in permanent deformation of the valve stem or damage to the internal valve stem spring.

Moreover, the travel distance between the extended and depressed positions of the valve stem is quite small, on the order of 2,032 mm (0,08 inch). This requires that the force applying element be moved with extreme accuracy to avoid depressing the valve stem beyond its limit, which can also result in permanent damage to the valve.

Another problem associated with inhalation actuated dispensing devices, in particular, is the setting of the amount of inhalation force necessary to release the latch of the spring loaded force applying element. Setting the force at too high a level may prevent users with severe respiratory problems from being able to actuate the device. On the other hand, setting the force too low may result in frequent misfirings.

It is also desirable that the device be actuable by means other than by inhalation, to permit the user to test the device without having to ingest the inhalant. It is further desirable that the canister be removable from the device to permit the user to ascertain the amount of inhalant remaining in the canister. Because the canister is opaque, this must be done by immersing the removed canister in a liquid and observing the level at which it floats.

The present invention overcomes the problems associated with the application of force on the valve stem through the use of a system in which the compression force applied to the valve stem is released immediately after the inhalant is sprayed. The only time any substantial force is applied to the valve stem is during that brief moment in which inhalant is being dispensed. No substantial force is applied at any other time. This being the case, the chances of accidental discharge or leakage of the inhalant or of damage to the valve stem or internal spring are greatly reduced.

Problems associated with setting the amount of force necessary to trip the carrier latch are solved through the use of a uniquely constructed toggle linkage which serves as a door actuated latch release for the force applying element. For testing

purposes, a button is provided with is externally accessible to actuate the latch release. To permit the user to ascertain the amount of inhalant remaining in the canister, the canister may be easily removed from the device at any time, because it is held in place by resilient arms located below the removable housing cover.

The present invention overcomes the problems associated with the application of force on the valve stem through the use of a system in which the force applied to the valve stem to cause depression is released immediately after the inhalant is sprayed. Any substantial force applied to the valve stem is during that brief moment when inhalant is being dispensed. No substantial force is applied at any other time. This being the case, the chances of accidental release or leakage of the inhalant or of deformation of the valve stem are greatly reduced.

It is, therefore a prime object of the present invention to provide an inhalation actuated dispensing apparatus in which substantial force is applied to the canister valve stem only at the moment in which the valve stem is depressed to dispense the inhalant.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an inhalation actuated dispensing apparatus which includes a dash-pot type assembly for releasing the force applied to the valve stem immediately after the inhalant is dispensed.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an inhalation actuated dispensing apparatus which includes a fluid connection between the force applying element and the carrier which moves the element against the valve stem to cause them to move as a unit.

It is another object to the present invention to provide an inhalation actuated dispensing apparatus which includes means for releasing the fluid connection to permit the force applying element to move relative to the carrier.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an inhalation actuated dispensing apparatus in which the relative position of the housing and carrier members indicates whether the apparatus is in the armed or disarmed state.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an inhalation actuated dispensing apparatus which includes a toggle linkage between the air passageway door and the latch for the carrier in which the amount of inhalation force required for actuation can be set at minimal levels with extreme accuracy.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an inhalation actuated dispensing apparatus which includes a manually actuable mechanism which permits the testing of the device.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an inhalation actuated dispensing apparatus in which the canister is releasably retained in the housing to permit removal thereof to ascertain the amount of inhalant in the canister.

It is another object of the present invention to provide an inhalation actuated dispensing apparatus which is comprised of a relatively small number of relatively simple parts that function reliably together and which are relatively inexpensive to manufacture and assemble.

In accordance with the present invention, an inhalation actuated dispensing apparatus is provided for use with a pressurized inhalant containing canister of the type having a moveable discharge valve stem which is normally spring loaded toward a charged position and is adapted to dispense a measured dose of inhalant when moved to a discharge position against the action of the internal valve stem spring. The apparatus includes a housing into which the canister is received. Means, effective actuated by inhalation, are provided for applying a force on the valve stem of sufficient magnitude to move the valve stem toward its discharge position and for automatically releasing the applied force after the inhalant has been dispensed.

The force applying and releasing means comprises piston means aligned with the valve stem, means moveable relative to the housing for carrying the piston means and means for operably connecting the piston means and the carrier means for movement as a unit and to permit relative movement therebetween. The carrier means is moveable relative to the housing between an armed position relatively remote from the canister and a disarmed or resting position relatively close to the canister. Means are provided for urging the carrier means towards the disarmed position.

Means are provided to latch the carrier means in the armed position, against the force of the urging means. The carrier means is released in response to inhalation by the user to permit the urging means to move the carrier means from the armed position toward the disarmed position.

The connecting means connects the piston means and the carrier means such that the piston means moves with the carrier means as a unit as the carrier means is moved from its armed position toward its disarmed position. However, the connecting means permits the piston means to move relative to the carrier means to release the force applied on the valve stem, after the piston means has moved the valve stem to its discharge position.

The connecting means preferably comprises fluid connecting means in the form of a sealed fluid reservoir operably interposed between the carrier means and the piston means and a fluid vent

situated in the carrier means. The carrier means includes a body having a bore into which the piston means is movably received. The bore and the piston means define the fluid reservoir. The fluid in the reservoir causes the piston to move with the carrier means as a unit as the carrier means moves toward its disarmed position because it moves so quickly. The vent permits the fluid to escape from the reservoir to permit the piston means to move relative to the carrier means to release the force applied on the valve stem by the piston means, after the carrier means moves to the disarmed position.

The housing has an air passageway. The latch means includes a door mounted on the housing for movement between a position substantially obstructing the passageway and a substantially non-obstructing position. The latch means further includes toggle means operably connecting the carrier means and the housing. The toggle means is moveable between a latched position, wherein the carrier means is retained in the armed position, and a release position wherein the carrier means latch is released. Means are provided for operably latching the toggle means and the door.

The toggle means comprise a first element and a second element. Means are provided for pivotally mounting one end of the first element on the carrier means for movement about a first axis. Means are provided for pivotally mounting one end of the second element on the housing for movement about a second axis. Means are provided for pivotally connecting the other end of the first element and the other end of the second element.

The door and the toggle means connecting means retain the toggle means in a latched position when the door is in the substantially obstructing position. In the latched position, the first axis, the second axis and the axis of the first and second element connecting means are substantially co-linearly aligned.

The housing includes first and second parts movable relative to each other to move the carrier means from the disarmed position to the armed position, against the action of the urging means. One of the housing parts is adapted to enclose the canister. The other part includes means for removably retaining the canister.

The piston means includes nozzle means adapted to align with the valve stem. The nozzle means includes a channel adapted to receive the inhalant dispensed from the valve stem. The channel has a section elongated in the direction of the valve stem axis and a conical section having an axis extending in a direction approximately perpendicular to the valve stem axis.

Means are provided for manually releasing the toggle linkage latching means. The manual releas-

ing means is preferably an externally accessible button.

To these and such other objects which may hereinafter appear, the present invention relates to an inhalation actuated dispensing apparatus as described in detail in the following specification, and recited in the annexed claims, taken together with the accompanying drawings, where like numerals refer to like parts, and in which:

FIGURE 1 is a side cross sectional view of the device with the parts shown in the rest position; FIGURE 2 is a side cross sectional view of the device with the parts shown as the device is being armed;

FIGURE 3 is a side cross sectional view of the device with the parts shown as the device is in the armed position;

FIGURE 4 is a side cross sectional view of the device with the parts shown as inhalation is occurring;

FIGURE 5 is a side cross sectional view of the device with the parts shown in the fired position.

As seen in FIG. 1, the device of the present invention comprises a hollow housing base, generally designated A, into which the pressurized inhalant containing canister is removably received. A cover member, generally designated B, encloses the canister and is removeably and movably mounted on housing base A.

The front on housing base A is provided with a protruding hollow mouthpiece 10 which is received in the mouth of the user. An air passageway extends through housing base A between mouthpiece 10 and an opening 12 in the rear of the housing base. Opening 12 is normally obstructed by a door 14.

As seen in figure 1, canister 16 is held in place in housing base A by two resilient arms 18 which have inwardly extending portions 20 which will normally lodge adjacent to the top of the canister to retain the canister in housing base A. Arms 18 can be manually separated to release the canister from the base.

Cover B is moveable relative to housing base A, between the position shown in figure 1 and the position shown in figure 2, in order to arm the device. The maximum length of the relative movement between the base and cover is determined by a circumferential recess 22 on the exterior of housing base A. Interlocking beads 24, 26 are provided on the housing base and cover, respectively, to define the extreme relative position of the cover and base and to permit the cover to snap fit onto the housing base. A canister spring 28 is provided between the bottom of the canister and the interior surface of cover B. As seen in figure 2, spring 28 is compressed as the device is being armed. Once armed, spring 28 moves cover B away from hous-

ing base A until beads 24,26 interlock, as shown in figure 3.

Canister 16 has a neck 30 from which an internally spring loaded valve stem 32 extends. Valve stem 32 is normally "charged" in its extended position (figures 1, 2, and 3) but when depressed (figure 5) will "fire" to dispense a measured dose of inhalant.

The element which applies the force on valve stem 32 is made up of two parts. Piston 34 is the part which is adjacent stem 32 and has a recess 36 into which stem 32 is received. Piston 34 is situated within the recess of a cup shaped carrier 38. Carrier 38 has a vent opening 40 through its bottom surface. Piston 34 is moveable with carrier 38 as a unit and relative to carrier 38 as well. The relative position of these parts is governed by a fluid connection formed between them. This connection is a result of the substantially air tight seal which the exterior flexible wall of the piston makes with the interior wall of the carrier. The parts will move together as a unit in order to depress the valve stem as the device is fired because this movement occurs too quickly for the air to be exhausted from the space between the piston and carrier. However, the piston will move relative to the carrier to release the force applied to the valve stem, after the device has been fired, because there is sufficient time for the air to exhaust through the vent opening. As the air exhausts, the piston can move relative to the carrier. The speed of the relative movement between the parts is controlled by the size of vent 40. Vent 40 is made small enough to prevent a significant amount of air from escaping from the space between the parts as the carrier is moved toward the canister to depress the valve stem. This occurs in approximately 100 milliseconds. However, it is large enough to permit a significant amount of air to escape within the range of approximately 0.5 to 3.0 seconds after firing.

Figure 2 illustrates the arming process. The user presses down on the cover B with his palm. The cover inside wall 37 pushes carrier fingers 39 projecting above and connected to carrier 38, compressing spring 42. However piston 34 has ears 35 resting on housing ledge 41. Therefore, the piston is held stationary while the carrier 38 is moving to the armed position, creating fluid space 44.

Figures, 3, 4, and 5 illustrate the movement of the piston 34 and carrier 38. As shown in figure 3, in the armed state, carrier spring 42 has been compressed and carrier 38 is proximate the bottom of housing base A. Piston 34 is remote from the bottom of carrier 38. Space 44, between piston 36 and carrier 38, is filled with air.

As inhalation occurs, (figure 4), the door 14 is pushed away from housing A by the vacuum cre-

ated. Door latch 54 separates from latching portion 56 of carrier link 58. Spring finger 68 urges door to return to vertical position, ready for next cycle. Carrier 38 is unlatched and spring 42 urges piston 34 and carrier 38 as a unit forcefully toward canister 16. Since this occurs relatively quickly (in approximately 0.1 second), the air in space 44 cannot escape through vent 40. Although the air may be compressed somewhat by the force, it acts as a connection between the carrier and the piston such that the force of spring 42 is transferred through carrier 38 to piston 34 and hence to valve stem 32, depressing the valve stem.

Depression of valve stem 32 causes a dose of inhalant to be released (figure 5) into the axial section 46 of a channel within piston 34. The axial section 46 is connected to a conical section 48. The latter guides and shapes the spray as it moves into mouthpiece 10.

Within a short period after firing, piston 34 will move, relative to carrier 38, downwardly and away from canister 16 as the air in space 44 vents, releasing the force applied to valve stem 32 and allowing the stem to once again assume its extended position. The internal spring within the valve causes movement of the stem and the adjacent piston 34.

Carrier 38 is latched in the armed position, as shown in figure 3, by a mechanical linkage which is connected to door 14. Door 14 is pivotally mounted on housing base A by pin 50 such that it can move from a closed position obstructing rear opening 12 (figures 1, 2, and 3) to an open position, as shown in figure 4, as the user inhales through mouthpiece 10.

Affixed to the top of door 14 and extending in a direction generally perpendicular thereto, is carrier latch 52. Latch 52 has a downwardly extending projection 54 at the end thereof. Projection 54 is shaped to interlock with a reciprocally shaped portion 56 of a carrier link 58. Link 58 is pivotally connected with one end of a housing link 60 by a pin 62. The other end of housing link 62 is pivotally connected to the wall of housing base A by pin 64.

When the device is armed, door 14 is parallel to the path of movement of carrier 38. Latch 52 engages carrier link 58. The carrier link and the housing link are substantially coplanar, that is, the axis of pins 62 and 64 are approximately in the same plane with pin 66. When the toggle formed by housing link 60 and carrier link 58 is in this state, the carrier is latched.

The effective length of latch 52 determines the position of projection 54 and the alignment of links 58 and 60. The amount of force necessary to trip the toggle and release the carrier is minimal when the links are coplanar. The length of latch 52 can be pre-set or made adjustable. While arming, car-

rier link 58 lifts latch 52 and then moves underneath it to permit projection 54 to engage portion 56 of the latch. The curved surfaces of each of these parts cooperate to achieve this position smoothly.

As will be appreciated, the more accurate the effective length of latch 52, the less force will be required to open the door and trip the toggle. The latched position is illustrated in figures 2 and 3.

When door 14 is moved inwardly as air rushes through opening 12 to fill the partial vacuum created as the user inhales through mouthpiece 10, latch 52 is moved away from link 58, releasing the toggle such that the links move relative to each other about pin 62 (figure 4). This unlatches carrier 38 so it (and piston 34) can be moved toward canister 16 by spring 42. Pushing cover B toward housing base A recompresses spring 42 and resets the toggle to again latch the carrier in the armed position.

A button 70 on door 14 is accessible through the opening 72 in the rear of housing base A and when pressed will manually trip the toggle to release the carrier latch. This mechanism is provided to permit testing of the device without the necessity of inhaling the inhalant.

It should now be appreciated that one important aspect of the present invention relates to a breath actuated inhalant dispensing device which employs a means for applying force on a spring loaded canister which releases the force on the valve stem almost immediately after firing. Accordingly, the only time substantial force is applied to the valve stem is as the device is being fired.

While the particular preferred embodiment of the force applying element disclosed herein includes a dash-pot arrangement, this aspect of the present invention should not be construed as being limited to this particular structure alone. Instead, this aspect of the present invention should be considered broad enough to include any linkage which can permit movement of parts of the force applying element as a unit to transmit force to the valve stem and thereafter permit the part adjacent the valve stem to move relative to its carrier, and away from the canister, to release the force on the stem. For example, a releasable toggle linkage between the piston and carrier is another structure which might be suitable for this task. Some types of proportional resistance governor devices might also be used.

Other aspects of the invention include the adjustability of the sensitivity of the door latch and the structure of the toggle linkage, the housing arms which permit removeability of the canister, and the manual testing feature.

## Claims

1. Inhalation actuated dispensing apparatus comprising

a housing (A),

piston means (34) moveable relative to said housing (A) from a first position toward a second position, said piston means (34) being adapted to apply a force, when in said second position, on a valve stem (32) spring loaded toward a charged position and adapted to dispense a measured dose of inhalant when moved to a discharge position, said force being sufficient to move said valve stem (32) toward its discharged position against the action of a valve stem spring, and said piston means (34) returning to said first position to automatically release said applied force, after the inhalant has been dispensed, **characterised in that :**

said housing (A) is adapted to enclose a pressurized inhalant containing canister (16) having said discharge valve stem (32)

and in that it further comprises :

- carrier means (38) for said piston means (34), said carrier means (38) being moveable relative to said housing between an armed position, relatively remote from a canister received within said housing, and a disarmed position, relatively close to a canister received within said housing,
- means (42) for urging said carrier means (38) towards said disarmed position,
- means for operably connecting said piston means (34) and said carrier means (38) for movement substantially as a unit and for relative movement therebetween,
- means for latching said carrier means (38) in said armed position, against the force of said urging means (42) and for releasing said carrier means (38), in response to inhalation by the user, to permit said urging means (42) to move said carrier means (38) from said armed position toward said disarmed position.

2. The apparatus of claim 1 characterised in that said connecting means connects said piston means (34) and said carrier means (38) such that said piston means (34) and said carrier means (38) move substantially as a unit as said carrier means (38) is moved from its armed position toward its disarmed position.
3. The apparatus of claims 1 or 2 characterised in that said connecting means connects said piston means (34) and said carrier means (38) to

- permit said piston means (34) to move relative to said carrier means (38), to release said applied force after said carrier means (38) has moved to said disarmed position.
4. The apparatus of claims 1 to 3 characterised in that said connecting means comprises fluid connecting means.
  5. The apparatus of claim 4 characterised in that said fluid connecting means comprises a reservoir of fluid (44) operably interposed between said carrier means (38) and said piston means (34) and said carrier means (38) or said piston means (34) contains a fluid vent.
  6. The apparatus of claim 5 characterised in that said carrier means (38) comprises a body having a recess into which said piston means (34) is sealingly received, said body and said piston means (34) defining said reservoir.
  7. The apparatus of claims 5 or 6 characterised in that fluid in said reservoir causes said piston means (34) and said carrier means (38) to move substantially as a unit as said carrier means (38) moves towards its disarmed position.
  8. The apparatus of claims 5 or 7 characterised in that said vent permits a sufficient amount of said fluid to escape from said reservoir so as to permit said piston means (34) to move toward said first position to release said applied force after said carrier means (38) moves to said disarmed position.
  9. The apparatus of claims 1 to 8 characterised in that said housing has an air passageway therein and said latch means comprises a door (14) mounted for movement in said housing between a position substantially obstructing the passageway and a substantially non-obstructing position.
  10. The apparatus of claims 1 to 9 characterised in that said latch means further comprise toggle means operably connecting said carrier means (38) and said housing, said toggle means being moveable between a latched position, and said carrier means (38) is retained in said armed position, and a position wherein said carrier means (38) is released.
  11. The apparatus of claim 9, or claim 10 when appended to claim 9, characterised in that it further comprises means for operably latching said door (14) in said obstructing position.
  12. The apparatus of claim 10, or claim 11 when appended to claim 10 characterised in that said toggle means comprises a first element (58) having first and second ends and a second element (60) having first and second ends, means for pivotally mounting one end of said first element on said carrier means (38) for movement about a first axis, means for pivotally mounting one end of said second element on said housing for movement about a second axis, and means for pivotally connecting another end of said first element and another end of said second element for movement about a third axis.
  13. The apparatus of claim 10 when appended to claim 9, characterised in that said door (14) and said toggle means retain said carrier means (38) in a latched position when said door (14) is in said substantially obstructing position.
  14. The apparatus of claim 9, characterized in that :
    - said latch means further comprise toggle means operably connecting said carrier means (38) and said housing, said toggle means being moveable between a latched position, and said carrier means (38) is retained in said armed position, and a position wherein said carrier means (38) is released,
    - and in that it further comprises means for operably latching said door (14) in said obstructing position,
    - said door (14) and said toggle means retaining said carrier means (38) in a latched position when said door (14) is in said substantially obstructing position.
  15. The apparatus of claim 9, characterized in that :
    - said latch means further comprise toggle means operably connecting said carrier means (38) and said housing, said toggle means being moveable between a latched position, and said carrier means (38) is retained in said armed position, and a position wherein said carrier means (38) is released,

said toggle means comprises a first element (58) having first and second ends and a second element (60) having first and second ends, means for pivotally mounting one end of said first element on said carrier means (38) for movement about a first axis, means for pivotally mounting one end of said sec-

- ond element on said housing for movement about a second axis, and means for pivotally connecting another end of said first element and another end of said second element for movement about a third axis, 5
- said door (14) and said toggle means retain said carrier means (38) in a latched position when said door (14) is in said substantially obstructing position. 10
16. The apparatus of claims 12 or 15, characterised in that said first axis, said second axis and said third axis are substantially co-linear when said toggle means is in said latched position. 15
17. The apparatus of claims 1 to 16 characterised in that said housing comprises first and second parts moveable relative to each other to move said carrier means (38) from said disarmed position to said armed position, against the action of said urging means (42). 20
18. The apparatus of claim 17 characterised in that one of said housing parts is adapted to enclose a canister (16) and the other said parts comprises means adapted to removably retain a canister (16). 25
19. The apparatus of claims 1 to 18 characterised in that said piston means (34) comprises nozzle means adapted to align with a valve stem (32), said nozzle means having a channel (46) adapted to receive inhalant dispensed from a valve stem (32) of a canister (16). 30 35
20. The apparatus of claim 19 characterised in that a valve stem (32) of a canister (16) is adapted to move in a given direction and in that said channel (46) comprises a first portion elongated in said given direction and a substantially conical portion (48) extending in a direction substantially perpendicular to said first portion. 40 45
21. The apparatus of claims 1 to 20 further comprising means for manually releasing said latch means. 50
22. The apparatus of claim 21 characterised in that said manual releasing means is accessible from the exterior of the said housing.

#### Patentansprüche

1. Inhalations-betätigte Ausgabevorrichtung, umfassend:

ein Gehäuse (A),  
 ein Kolbenmittel (34), das relativ zu dem Gehäuse (A) von einer ersten Position in Richtung einer zweiten Position beweglich ist, wobei das Kolbenmittel (34) ausgelegt ist, in der zweiten Position eine Kraft an einen Ventilstößel (32) anzulegen, der in Richtung einer geladenen Position federbelastet ist und ausgelegt ist, eine zugemessene Dosis von Inhalat auszugeben, wenn er in eine Entladeposition bewegt wird, wobei die Kraft ausreicht, den Ventilstößel (32) gegen die Wirkung einer Ventilstößelfeder in Richtung seiner entladenen Position zu bewegen, und wobei das Kolbenmittel (34) in die erste Position zurückkehrt, um die angelegte Kraft automatisch zu lösen, nachdem das Inhalat ausgegeben wurde, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß:

das Gehäuse (A) ausgelegt ist, einen unter Druck stehendes Inhalat enthaltenden Behälter (16) mit dem Entladeventilstößel (32) aufzunehmen, und daß sie ferner umfaßt:

- ein Trägermittel (38) für das Kolbenmittel (34), wobei das Trägermittel (38) relativ zu dem Gehäuse zwischen einer von einem in dem Gehäuse aufgenommenen Behälter relativ entfernten geladenen Position und einer zu einem in dem Gehäuse aufgenommenen Behälter relativ nahen entladenen Position beweglich ist,
- ein Mittel (42) zum Spannen des Trägermittels (38) in Richtung der entladenen Position;
- ein Mittel zur betriebsmäßigen Verbindung des Kolbenmittels (34) mit dem Trägermittel (38) zur Bewegung im wesentlichen als Einheit und zur relativen Bewegung zwischen diesen;
- ein Mittel zum Sperren des Trägermittels (38) in der geladenen Position gegen die Kraft des Spannmittels (42) und zum Lösen des Trägermittels (38) in Antwort auf Inhalation durch den Verwender, damit das Spannmittel (42) das Trägermittel (38) von der geladenen Position in Richtung der entladenen Position drücken kann.

2. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 1, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Verbindungsmittel das Kolbenmittel (34) mit dem Trägermittel (38) derart verbindet, daß sich das Kolbenmittel (34) und das Trägermittel (38) im wesentlichen als Einheit bewegen, wenn das Trägermittel (38) von seiner geladenen Position in Richtung seiner entladenen Position bewegt wird.



3. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 1 oder 2, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Verbindungsmittel das Kolbenmittel (34) mit dem Trägermittel (38) verbindet, so daß das Kolbenmittel (34) relativ zu dem Trägermittel (38) bewegt werden kann, um die angelegte Kraft zu lösen, nachdem das Trägermittel (38) in die entladene Position bewegt wurde. 5
4. Vorrichtung nach den Ansprüchen 1 bis 3, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Verbindungsmittel ein Fluidverbindungsmittel enthält. 10
5. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 4, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Fluidverbindungsmittel ein Fluidreservoir (44) enthält, das betriebsmäßig zwischen dem Trägermittel (38) und dem Kolbenmittel (34) angeordnet ist und wobei das Trägermittel (38) oder das Kolbenmittel (34) eine Fluidentlüftung enthält. 15
6. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 5, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Trägermittel (38) einen Körper mit einer Ausnehmung aufweist, in der das Kolbenmittel (34) dicht aufgenommen ist, wobei der Körper und das Kolbenmittel (34) das Reservoir bilden. 20
7. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 5 oder 6, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Fluid in dem Reservoir das Kolbenmittel (34) und das Trägermittel (38) im wesentlichen als Einheit bewegen läßt, wenn sich das Trägermittel (38) in Richtung seiner entladenen Position bewegt. 25
8. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 5 oder 7, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die Entlüftung eine ausreichende Menge des Fluids aus dem Reservoir entweichen läßt, damit sich das Kolbenmittel (34) in Richtung der ersten Position bewegen kann, um die angelegte Kraft zu lösen, nachdem sich das Trägermittel (38) in die entladene Position bewegt hat. 30
9. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 1 bis 8, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Gehäuse eine Luftpassage enthält und das Sperrmittel einen Verschuß (14) aufweist, der zur Bewegung in dem Gehäuse zwischen einer die Passage im wesentlichen verschließenden Position und einer im wesentlichen nicht verschließenden Position angebracht ist. 35
10. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 1 bis 9, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Sperrmittel ferner ein Kniehebelmittel umfaßt, das mit dem Trägermittel (38) und dem Gehäuse betriebsmäßig verbunden ist, wobei das Kniehebelmittel zwischen einer Sperrposition, in der das Trägermittel (38) in der geladenen Position gehalten ist, und einer Position, in der das Trägermittel (38) gelöst ist, beweglich ist. 40
11. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 9 oder Anspruch 10, sofern von Anspruch 9 abhängig, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß sie ferner ein Mittel zur betriebsmäßigen Sperre des Verschlusses (14) in der Verschußposition aufweist. 45
12. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 10 oder 11, sofern von Anspruch 10 abhängig, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Kniehebelmittel umfaßt: ein erstes Element (58) mit ersten und zweiten Enden und ein zweites Element (60) mit ersten und zweiten Enden, ein Mittel zum schwenkbaren Anbringen eines Endes des ersten Elements an dem Trägermittel (38) zur Bewegung um eine erste Achse, ein Mittel zum schwenkbaren Anbringen eines Endes des zweiten Elements an dem Gehäuse zur Bewegung um eine zweite Achse, und ein Mittel zum schwenkbaren Verbinden eines anderen Endes des ersten Elements mit einem anderen Ende des zweiten Elements zur Bewegung um eine dritte Achse. 50
13. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 10, sofern von Anspruch 9 abhängig, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß der Verschuß (14) und das Kniehebelmittel das Trägermittel (38) in einer Sperrposition halten, wenn sich der Verschuß (14) in der im wesentlichen Verschußposition befindet. 55
14. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 9, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß:
  - das Sperrmittel ferner ein Kniehebelmittel umfaßt, das das Trägermittel (38) mit dem Gehäuse betriebsmäßig verbindet, wobei das Kniehebelmittel zwischen einer Sperrposition, in der das Trägermittel (38) in der geladenen Position gehalten ist, und einer Position, in der das Trägermittel (38) gelöst ist, beweglich ist,
  - und daß sie ferner ein Mittel zur betriebsmäßigen Sperre des Verschlusses (14) in der Verschußposition umfaßt,
  - wobei der Verschuß (14) und das Kniehebelmittel das Trägermittel (38) in der

Sperrposition halten, wenn sich der Verschluss (14) in der im wesentlichen Verschlussposition befindet.

15. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 9, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß:
- das Sperrmittel ferner ein Kniehebelmittel umfaßt, das das Trägermittel (38) mit dem Gehäuse betriebsmäßig verbindet, wobei das Kniehebelmittel zwischen einer Sperrposition, in der das Trägermittel (38) in der geladenen Position gehalten ist, und einer Position, in der das Trägermittel (38) gelöst ist, beweglich ist, wobei das Kniehebelmittel umfaßt: ein erstes Element (58) mit ersten und zweiten Enden und ein zweites Element (60) mit ersten und zweiten Enden, ein Mittel zum schwenkbaren Anbringen eines Endes des ersten Elements an dem Trägermittel (38) zur Bewegung um eine erste Achse, ein Mittel zum schwenkbaren Anbringen eines Endes des zweiten Elements an dem Gehäuse zur Bewegung um eine zweite Achse und ein Mittel zum schwenkbaren Verbinden eines anderen Endes des ersten Elements mit einem anderen Ende des zweiten Elements zur Bewegung um eine dritte Achse,
  - wobei der Verschluss (14) und das Kniehebelmittel das Trägermittel (38) in einer Sperrposition halten, wenn sich der Verschluss (14) in der im wesentlichen Verschlussposition befindet.
16. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 12 oder 15, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß die erste Achse, die zweite Achse und die dritte Achse im wesentlichen co-linear sind, wenn sich das Kniehebelmittel in der Sperrposition befindet.
17. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 1 bis 16, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Gehäuse erste und zweite Teile aufweist, die relativ zueinander beweglich sind, um das Trägermittel (38) gegen die Wirkung des Spannmittels (38) von der entladenen Position in die geladene Position zu bewegen.
18. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 17, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß eines der Gehäuseteile zur Aufnahme eines Behälters (16) ausgeführt ist, und das andere der Teile ein Mittel aufweist, das zum entfernbaren Halten eines Behälters (16) ausgeführt ist.

19. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 1 bis 18, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das Kolbenmittel (34) ein Düsenmittel aufweist, das zur Ausrichtung mit einem Ventilstößel (32) ausgeführt ist, wobei das Düsenmittel einen Kanal (46) aufweist, der zur Aufnahme von Inhalat ausgeführt ist, das von einem Ventilstößel (32) eines Behälters (16) abgegeben sind.
20. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 19, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß ein Ventilstößel (32) eines Behälters (16) zur Bewegung in eine gegebene Richtung ausgeführt ist und daß der Kanal (46) einen ersten Abschnitt, der in die gegebene Richtung langgestreckt ist, und einen im wesentlichen konischen Abschnitt (48), der in eine zu dem ersten Abschnitt im wesentlichen orthogonale Richtung verläuft, umfaßt.
21. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 1 bis 20, die ferner Mittel umfaßt, um das Sperrmittel manuell zu lösen.
22. Vorrichtung nach Anspruch 21, dadurch gekennzeichnet, daß das manuelle Lösemittel vom Äußeren des Gehäuses her zugänglich ist.

#### Revendications

1. Appareil d'administration actionné par inhalation comprenant un boîtier (A), un moyen (34) de piston mobile par rapport audit boîtier (A) d'une première position vers une seconde position, ledit moyen (34) de piston étant adapté pour appliquer une force, lorsqu'il est dans ladite seconde position, sur un ressort de tige (32) de valve comprimé en direction d'une position de charge et adapté pour délivrer une dose mesurée de produit pour inhalation lorsqu'il se déplace vers une position de délivrance, ladite force étant suffisante pour déplacer ladite tige (32) de valve en direction de sa position de délivrance en s'opposant à l'action d'un ressort de tige de valve, et ledit moyen (34) de piston revenant à ladite première position pour libérer automatiquement ladite force appliquée, après que le produit pour inhalation a été délivré, caractérisé en ce que: ledit boîtier (A) est adapté pour enfermer un récipient (16) contenant un produit pour inhalation sous pression comportant ladite tige (32) de valve de délivrance et en ce qu'il comprend en outre:

- un moyen (38) de support pour ledit moyen (34) de piston, ledit moyen (38) de support étant mobile par rapport audit boîtier entre une position armée, relativement éloignée d'un récipient admis dans ledit boîtier, et une position désarmée, relativement proche d'un récipient admis dans ledit boîtier,
  - un moyen (42) pour exercer une pression sur ledit moyen (38) de support en direction de ladite position désarmée,
  - un moyen pour raccorder de manière à pouvoir fonctionner ledit moyen (34) de piston et ledit moyen (38) de support pour le mouvement sensiblement en bloc et pour le mouvement relatif entre eux,
  - des moyens pour verrouiller ledit moyen (38) de support dans ladite position armée, en s'opposant à la force dudit moyen (42) de pression et pour libérer ledit moyen (38) de support, en réponse à l'inhalation par l'utilisateur, pour permettre audit moyen (42) de pression de déplacer ledit moyen (38) de support de ladite position armée en direction de ladite position désarmée.
2. Appareil selon la revendication 1 caractérisé en ce que ledit moyen de raccordement raccorde ledit moyen (34) de piston et ledit moyen (38) de support de sorte que ledit moyen (34) de piston et ledit moyen (38) de support se déplacent sensiblement en bloc lorsque ledit moyen (38) de support est déplacé de sa position armée en direction de sa position désarmée.
3. Appareil selon les revendications 1 ou 2 caractérisé en ce que ledit moyen de raccordement raccorde ledit moyen (34) de piston et ledit moyen (38) de support pour permettre audit moyen (34) de piston de se déplacer par rapport audit moyen (38) de support, pour libérer ladite force appliquée après que ledit moyen (38) de support s'est déplacé en direction de ladite position désarmée.
4. Appareil selon les revendications 1 à 3 caractérisé en ce que ledit moyen de raccordement comprend un moyen de raccordement de fluide.
5. Appareil selon la revendication 4 caractérisé en ce que ledit moyen de raccordement de fluide comprend un réservoir (44) de fluide interposé de manière à pouvoir fonctionner entre ledit moyen (38) de support et ledit moyen (34) de piston et ledit moyen (38) de support ou ledit moyen (34) de piston contient un orifice de fluide.
6. Appareil selon la revendication 5 caractérisé en ce que ledit moyen (38) de support comprend un corps comportant un évidement dans lequel ledit moyen (34) de piston est admis de manière étanche, ledit corps et ledit moyen (34) de piston définissant ledit réservoir.
7. Appareil selon les revendications 5 ou 6 caractérisé en ce que ledit fluide dans ledit réservoir cause le déplacement dudit moyen (34) de piston et dudit moyen (38) de support sensiblement en bloc lorsque ledit moyen (38) de support se déplace en direction de sa position désarmée.
8. Appareil selon les revendications 5 à 7 caractérisé en ce que ledit orifice permet à une quantité suffisante dudit fluide de s'échapper dudit réservoir afin de permettre audit moyen (34) de piston de se déplacer en direction de ladite première position pour libérer ladite force appliquée après que ledit moyen (38) de support se déplace vers ladite position désarmée.
9. Appareil selon les revendications 1 à 8 caractérisé en ce que ledit boîtier comporte un passage d'air à l'intérieur et ledit moyen de verrou comprend un clapet (14) montée de manière à se déplacer dans ledit boîtier entre une position qui obstrue pratiquement le passage et une position qui n'obstrue pratiquement pas le passage.
10. Appareil selon les revendications 1 à 9 caractérisé en ce que lesdits moyens de verrou comprennent en outre un moyen genouillère raccordant de manière à pouvoir fonctionner ledit moyen (38) de support et ledit boîtier, ledit moyen genouillère étant mobile entre une position verrouillée, et ledit moyen (38) de support est maintenu dans ladite position armée, et une position dans laquelle ledit moyen (38) de support est libéré.
11. Appareil selon la revendication 9, ou la revendication 10 lorsqu'elle est annexée à la revendication 9, caractérisé en ce qu'il comprend en outre un moyen pour verrouiller de manière à pouvoir fonctionner ledit clapet (14) dans ladite position d'obstruction.
12. Appareil selon la revendication 10, ou la revendication 11 lorsqu'elle est annexée à la revendication 10 caractérisé en ce que ledit moyen

genouillère comprend un premier élément (58) comportant des première et seconde extrémités et un second élément (60) comportant des première et seconde extrémités, un moyen pour monter de manière à pouvoir pivoter une extrémité dudit premier élément sur ledit moyen (38) de support pour le mouvement autour d'un premier axe, un moyen pour monter de manière à pouvoir pivoter une extrémité dudit second élément sur ledit boîtier pour le mouvement autour d'un second axe, et un moyen pour raccorder de manière à pouvoir pivoter une autre extrémité dudit premier élément et une autre extrémité dudit second élément pour le mouvement autour d'un troisième axe.

13. Appareil selon la revendication 10 lorsqu'elle est annexée à la revendication 9, caractérisé en ce que ledit clapet (14) et ledit moyen genouillère articulé maintiennent ledit moyen (38) de support dans une position verrouillée lorsque ledit clapet (14) est dans ladite position réalisant sensiblement l'obstruction.

14. Appareil selon la revendication 9, caractérisé en ce que:

- lesdits moyens de verrou comprennent en outre un moyen genouillère raccordant de manière à pouvoir fonctionner ledit moyen (38) de support et ledit boîtier, ledit moyen genouillère étant mobile entre une position verrouillée, et ledit moyen (38) de support est maintenu dans ladite position armée, et une position dans laquelle ledit moyen (38) de support est libéré.
- et en ce qu'il comprend en outre un moyen pour verrouiller de manière à pouvoir fonctionner ledit clapet (14) dans ladite position d'obstruction,
- ledit clapet (14) et ledit moyen genouillère maintenant ledit moyen (38) de support dans une position verrouillée lorsque ledit clapet (14) est dans ladite position réalisant sensiblement l'obstruction.

15. Appareil selon la revendication 9, caractérisé en ce que:

- lesdits moyens de verrou comprennent un moyen genouillère raccordant fonctionnellement ledit moyen (38) de support et ledit boîtier, ledit moyen genouillère étant mobile entre une position verrouillée, où ledit moyen (38) de support est maintenu dans ladite position armée, et une position dans laquelle ledit moyen (38) de support est libéré,

- ledit moyen genouillère comprend un premier élément (58) comportant des première et seconde extrémités et un second élément (60) comportant des première et seconde extrémités, un moyen pour monter de manière à pouvoir pivoter une extrémité dudit premier élément sur ledit moyen (38) de support pour le mouvement autour d'un premier axe, un moyen pour monter de manière à pouvoir pivoter une extrémité dudit second élément sur ledit boîtier pour le mouvement autour d'un second axe, et un moyen pour raccorder de manière à pouvoir pivoter une autre extrémité dudit premier élément et une autre extrémité dudit second élément pour le mouvement autour d'un troisième axe,
- ledit clapet (14) et ledit moyen genouillère maintiennent ledit moyen (38) de support dans une position verrouillée lorsque ledit clapet (14) est dans ladite position réalisant sensiblement l'obstruction.

16. Appareil selon les revendications 12 ou 15, caractérisé en ce que ledit premier axe, ledit second axe et ledit troisième axe sont sensiblement colinéaires lorsque ledit moyen genouillère est dans ladite position verrouillée.

17. Appareil selon les revendications 1 à 16 caractérisé en ce que ledit boîtier comprend des première et seconde pièces mobiles l'une par rapport à l'autre pour déplacer ledit moyen (38) de support de ladite position désarmée vers ladite position armée, en s'opposant à l'action dudit moyen (42) de pression.

18. Appareil selon la revendication 17 caractérisé en ce qu'une desdites pièces de boîtier est adaptée pour enfermer un récipient (16) et l'autre desdites pièces comprend un moyen adapté pour maintenir de manière à pouvoir le retirer un récipient (16).

19. Appareil selon les revendications 1 à 18 caractérisé en ce que ledit moyen (34) de piston comprend un moyen de tubulure adapté pour s'aligner avec une tige (32) de valve, et ledit moyen de tubulure comportant un conduit (46) adapté pour recevoir le produit pour inhalation délivré par une tige (32) de valve d'un récipient (16).

20. Appareil selon la revendication 19 caractérisé en ce qu'une tige (32) de valve d'un récipient (16) est adaptée pour se déplacer dans une direction donnée et en ce que ledit conduit

(46) comprend une première partie allongée dans ladite direction donnée et une partie (48) sensiblement conique s'étendant dans une direction sensiblement perpendiculaire à ladite première direction.

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21. Appareil selon les revendications 1 à 20 comprenant en outre un moyen pour libérer manuellement ledit moyen de verrou.

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22. Appareil selon la revendication 21 caractérisé en ce que ledit moyen de libération manuelle est accessible de l'extérieur dudit boîtier.

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